

Texas Historical Commission staff (LCH), 11/23/2005; revised 4/17/2006

Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and 24" x 16" interpretive plaque with post

Hidalgo County (Job #16605) Subject GY, AA (Atlas 13730) UTM: 14 581694E 2885570N

Location: Pharr, 7.4 mi. S on Doffin Rd. near Stewart Rd

### **ELI JACKSON CEMETERY**

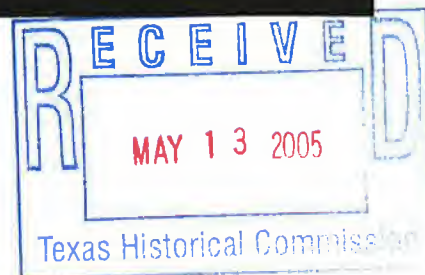
IN 1857, NATHANIEL JACKSON CAME FROM ALABAMA AND ESTABLISHED A RANCH IN THIS AREA. A FORMER SLAVE OWNER, JACKSON, WHO WAS WHITE, CAME WITH HIS WIFE MATILDA HICKS, WHO WAS BLACK, THEIR CHILDREN AND HIS FREED SLAVES. ON HIS 5,500-ACRE RANCH, JACKSON RAISED LIVESTOCK AND GREW VEGETABLES, COTTON AND SUGARCANE. HE ALSO ESTABLISHED A CHAPEL THAT SERVED FAMILY AND FRIENDS. HE WAS KNOWN FOR HIS GENEROSITY AND HOSPITALITY, AND MANY, INCLUDING RUN-AWAY SLAVES, CAME TO THE RANCH IN NEED OF LODGING AND OTHER RESOURCES. UPON JACKSON'S DEATH IN 1865, HIS HEIRS DIVIDED THE PROPERTY. THE SHARE TO HIS SON ELI INCLUDED THIS SITE, THE FAMILY CEMETERY. ELI AND HIS WIFE, ELIZABETH KERR, AND THEIR CHILDREN CONTINUED THE FAMILY TRADITION OF HOSPITALITY. ELI SERVED AS A COUNTY OFFICIAL, AS DID HIS SON NATHANIEL "POLO" JACKSON. POLO'S DAUGHTER ADELA OPERATED THE RANCH AND CARED FOR THE CEMETERY UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1992.

TODAY, THE ELI JACKSON FAMILY CEMETERY REPRESENTS THE EARLY AREA RANCHING COMMUNITIES. THE BURIAL GROUND IS A TIE TO THE JACKSON FAMILY, AND TO THEIR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS FROM THE PAST WHO SHARE THIS AS A FINAL RESTING PLACE.

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY - 2005

OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER  
APPLICATION FORM

Please complete both sides of form.



16605

THC use only

HTC-2005

HG-C072

Proposed marker title: Eli Jackson Cemetery

(Title subject to change by Texas Historical Commission staff and/or State Marker Review Board.)

County: Hidalgo Nearest town (on state highway map): PharrMarker location (street address and city, or specific directions from nearest town on state highway map):  
7.4 miles south of Pharr on Doffin Road, 500 Feet east of I RoadWill the marker go at the actual site of the topic being marked? ☒ Yes ☐ No If the answer is no, provide the distance and directions to the actual location from the marker (i.e. 100 yards east). Note that grave markers, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and Historic Texas Cemetery markers must be placed at the actual sites.

## APPROVAL OF COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The county historical commission (CHC) must approve the marker application, narrative history and documentation before they are forwarded to the THC. The signature of the representative below signifies the CHC has reviewed and approved the application in full.

Printed name of CHC chair or marker committee chair: Rick deJulioSignature: Rick deJulio

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: 707 N. 15th St. City, zip: McAllen 78501Daytime phone: 956-682-2400 Fax: 956-383-7849 Email: texican@hiline.net

\*The CHC or marker committee chair will be the primary contact regarding the application. The marker committee chair's signature is valid only if notification is properly filed with the THC (call 512/463-5853 to request a form).

## PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Permission from the property owner for placement of a marker is required. Provide the name of a contact person if the owner is an institution, organization or public entity. Do not complete this section if the marker is to be placed on right-of-way maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation.

Name: Diana CardenasContact person (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ City, zip: Pharr 78577Mailing address: 100 East St. John DrivePhone: 956-821-9653 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: elijacksoncemetery@hotmail.comOwner's signature: Diana CardenasDo you wish to receive copies of all correspondence concerning this marker application? ☒ Yes ☐ No

## PAYMENT INFORMATION (payment form will be sent to the following):

Name: Audrey Hazlett

Contact person (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

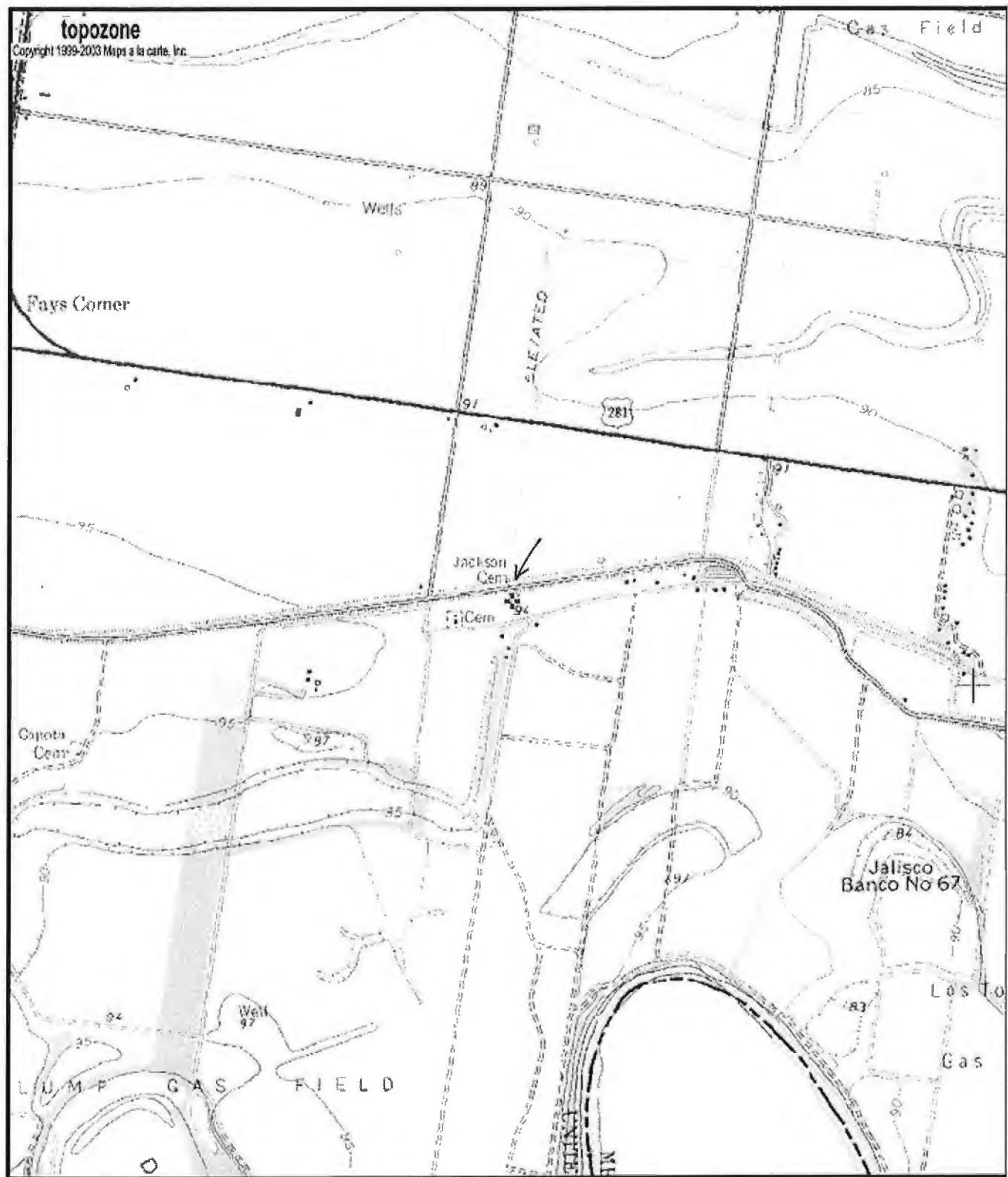
Mailing address: 515 S. Kansas St. City, zip: Weslaco 78596Daytime phone: 956-968-9142 Fax: 956-447-0955 Email: elijacksoncemetery@hotmail.comahazlett@weslaco.lib.tx.us

## SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges and time delays, use a business street address (Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday). If the marker is to be placed on state highway right-of-way, it will be shipped directly to the district highway engineer.

Name: DIANA CARDENASStreet address: 100 E. ST. John DriveCity, zip: PHARR 78577 Daytime phone: 956-821-9653

(OVER)



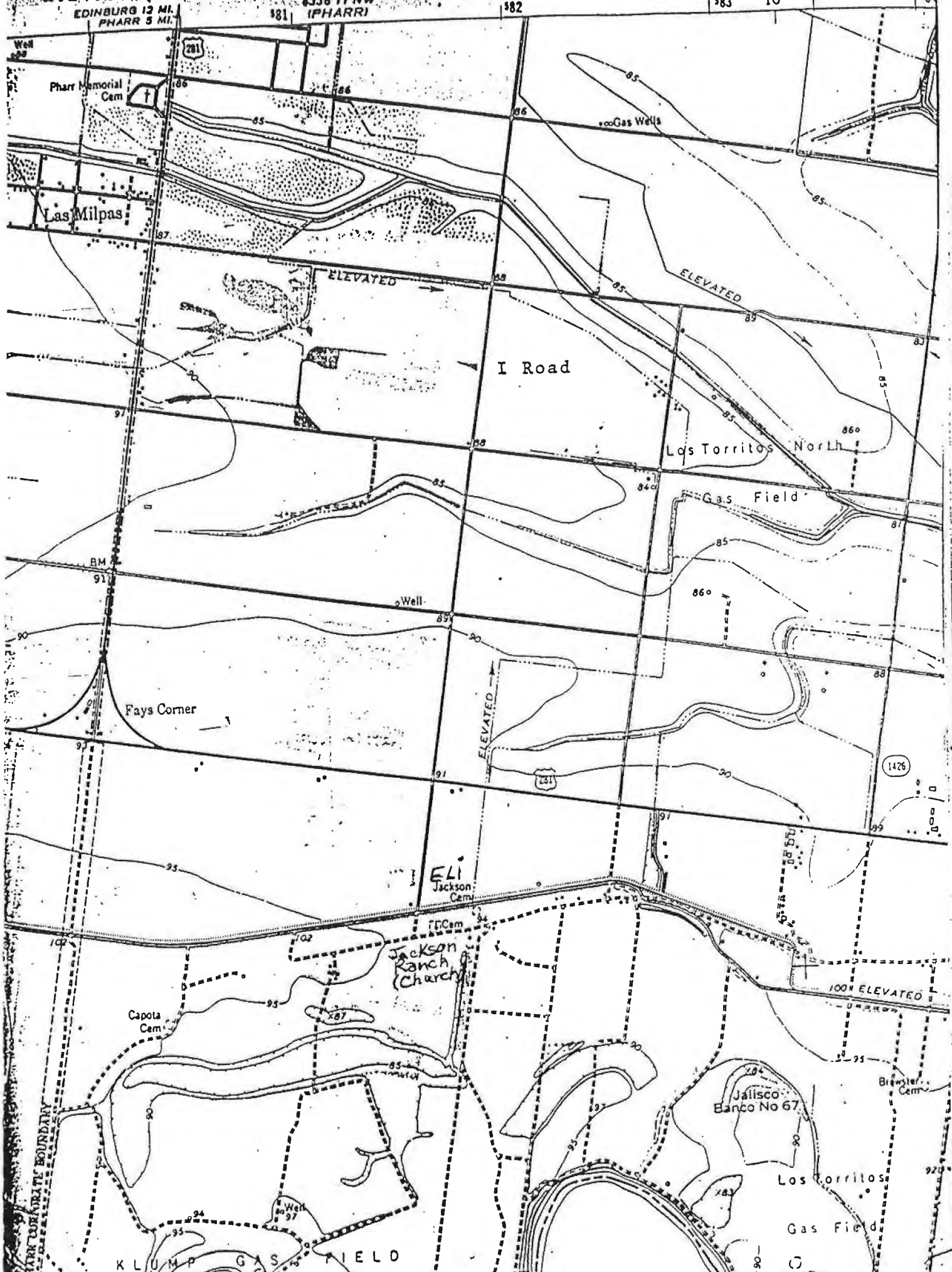
0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 1.5 km  
 0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 mi

Map center is UTM 14 581728E 2885532N (WGS84/NAD83)

**Las Milpas** quadrangle

Projection is UTM Zone 14 NAD83 Datum

M=5.718  
 G=0.359



**The Eli Jackson Cemetery****By****Diana Cardenas**

**Location.** The Eli Jackson Cemetery is located about seven miles south of Pharr, Texas on U S Highway 281. Driving from Pharr, travel south on U S 281 to Fay's Corner (where U S 281 and Old Military Highway merge) then turn east on U S 281 E (Old Military Highway), about .8 miles. Continuing from U S 281 E (Old Military Highway), turn south on "I" Road and drive about .4 miles over the levee (South "I" Road becomes Doffin Road once you cross the levee). The Eli Jackson Cemetery is located about 500 feet east from the Jackson Churchyard Cemetery and is within the city limits of San Juan, Texas. The cemetery is located within an 11-acre fenced field and it is also fenced in; the cemetery is situated about 400 feet from the main entrance, against the bank of an elevated canal.

The Eli Jackson Cemetery lies in *Porcion 71*, land granted to Narciso Cavazos by the Crown of Spain in 1767. Nathaniel Jackson, pioneer settler of the Rio Grande Valley, purchased *Porcion 71* on July 27, 1857 (1) and founded Jackson Ranch where he settled with his family along the banks of the Rio Grande. The Eli Jackson Cemetery and the Jackson Churchyard Cemetery are still maintained by direct descendants of Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865).

**Description.** The Jackson Cemetery, now known as the Eli Jackson Cemetery and the Eli Jackson-Brewster Cemetery, consists of about one acre of land, 120 x 100 feet. It is located at the north side of a fenced in 11-acre field with reserved access to a



Right of Way. (2) (Present adjacent resident #1 is aware of the Right of Way and will remove trees, plants, and other personal belongings obstructing the use of Right of Way). All headstones face east and are located in a grassed area with few large trees located on the west side of the cemetery. The Eli Jackson Cemetery in 2003 contained 75 plots and each plot holds about 2 to 3 gravesites. There is an estimate of about 150 graves but actual grave counts may exceed this due to multiple burials in some unmarked graves as well as those that are marked. The earliest marked grave is that of George Brewster, who died on June 18, 1896; the earliest burial (unmarked grave) is believed to be that of Nathaniel Jackson, Jackson Ranch founder, who died on May 12, 1865. (3)

**Land Acquisition.** The Eli Jackson Cemetery was part of the Old Jackson Ranch founded in 1857 by Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865), a (white) former slave owner who arrived in the Lower Rio Grande Valley with his wife (a black woman), his family (mulattos) and her children (black), and his freed slaves. Nathaniel Jackson came to Texas from Georgia by way of Mobile, Alabama in five covered wagons in 1857. (4) His family consisted of his wife, Matilda Hicks; their seven interracial children: Columbus, Eli, Martin, Bryant, John A., Matilda, and Lucinda; and his three stepdaughters from Matilda Hicks' previous marriage to John Smith: Nancy, Emily, and Myria.

Upon Nathaniel Jackson's arrival to the Rio Grande Valley area, he purchased land known as *Porcion 71* from E. D. Smith and his wife on July 27, 1857. The land consisted of 5,535 acres of land or 5,680,500 square *varas*, starting at the mouth of the Rio Grande and extending north, about 13 miles, to what is now the city of Edinburg, Texas. *Porcion 71* had been granted to Narciso Cavazos, a Mexican settler, in 1767 by the Crown of Spain under the *Act of Possession* or *General Visita*. (5) At one point,

*Porcion 71* had consisted of land that is now parts of Donna, Alamo, San Juan, and Edinburg, Texas.

**Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865).** Nathaniel Jackson founded Jackson Ranch in 1857 along the banks of the Rio Grande on land south of present San Juan, Texas. At Jackson Ranch, Nathaniel raised cattle, sheep, and goats which roamed his land freely (6) and he also registered his cattle brand, as NJ in 1857. (7) Nathaniel grew vegetables, cotton, and some sugarcane; and he was known to share his blessings with those less fortunate than he was.

Nathaniel Jackson established a chapel at his home around 1857 for his family and everyone who visited the Jackson Ranch was welcomed to join in on the prayer services. After people started arriving in the area, a small community was formed and many citizens ~~would~~ stop by Nathaniel Jackson's house and joined in on the worship services, participated in spiritual readings, and attended prayer services. He soon made a chapel of thatch and adobe (8) next to his house but the continuous flooding of the Rio Grande repeatedly destroyed the chapel and some, if not most, of the surrounding homes at Jackson Ranch. The adobe and thatch chapel and homes had to be rebuilt; it was not until 1896 that the church was finally built of wood. However, the floods and flooding continued and soon the community people started going elsewhere for prayer services.

When W. H. Chatfield surveyed the Rio Grande Valley in 1893, he took notice of the deteriorating chapel and wrote about its condition in his book, *Twin Cities of the Border*. Chatfield stated, "The Methodist Church, which is situated at the east end of Main Street, near the River, is not in very good repair and shows few signs of recent occupancy." (9) Nonetheless, a few people remained loyal to the chapel and still

attended prayer services with Nathaniel Jackson and his family. Many visitors joined in on the harvesting of the crops and in the "revivals" held at Jackson Ranch. (The Jackson Methodist Church received a Texas Historical Marker in 1982 in recognition of being the first established Protestant Church in the Rio Grande Valley, in 1896.) (10)

Nathaniel Jackson was highly respected by everyone that knew him, and his hospitality was widely known throughout the Rio Grande Valley. Many times, people simply came to visit the Jacksons because of their known kindness; however, several visitors stayed permanently at Jackson Ranch; the 1880 US Census reported 16 families there. (11) Nathaniel Jackson's generosity extended far beyond the context of the Jackson Ranch. Nathaniel was not only known as a pioneer settler for the South Texas Region; but his kindness and hospitality were major factors that led to the development and expansion of the Rio Grande Valley. During the Civil War years along the Rio Grande, Nathaniel Jackson supported the federal cause for he was a southerner who opposed secession.

Nathaniel Jackson died on May 12, 1865 and was buried on Jackson Ranch in the Jackson family cemetery, now known as the Eli Jackson Cemetery. (A clump of lilies is the only visible marker since flooding washed away the original wooden monument.) No permanent marker exists nor was there ever any written document kept to validate that Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865) was buried in the Eli Jackson Cemetery. The only known proof is oral history from direct descendants of his grandson Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson (1875-1929). At the time of his death, Nathaniel Jackson's heirs were: Matilda Hicks (widow); and his seven children: Eli Jackson, Martin Jackson, Matilda Rowland,



Columbus Jackson, Bryant Jackson, John A. Jackson, and Lucinda Lyon (Fayette Lyon, widower of Lucinda, inherited her share). (12)

**Eli Jackson (1832-1911).** Eli Jackson was the son of Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865) and Matilda Hicks; and he was born in Wilcox County, Alabama. (13) He arrived in the Rio Grande Valley with his father Nathaniel Jackson, his mother, four brothers and two sisters, and his three stepsisters in five covered wagons and settled on Jackson Ranch. Eli Jackson built his home on land that he inherited from his father in 1865 and land that he purchased from some of his brothers and a sister in 1878 when the Jackson heirs re-divided their shares. (14) Eli Jackson's Ranch was established about 500 feet east of his brother, Martin Jackson's, house; there, Eli Jackson began to raise his family. Hence, the Jackson family cemetery, established some time between 1857 and 1865 when Nathaniel Jackson was buried there, became known as the Eli Jackson Cemetery to distinguish it from the Jackson Ranch Churchyard Cemetery, established in 1896.

Eli Jackson married Elizabeth Kerr on November 11, 1877 and they had nine children: Alice Jackson, Robert Jackson, Angeline Jackson, Sylvia Jackson, Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson, Matilda Jackson, Elmira Jackson, Amanda Jackson, and Amelia Jackson. (15) Eli Jackson made his home at Jackson Ranch on the north side of the Old Stagecoach Road (present Doffin Road) just east of the Jackson Ranch Church. He was a farmer just like his father, Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865), and he raised cows, crops, and sugarcane. Also, Eli Jackson registered his cattle brand as EJ on April 1867 at the Hidalgo County Courthouse. (16)

Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865) was known for his hospitality and his manners were undoubtedly inherited by his children. Eli Jackson was also respected by everyone

that knew him; and members of the community and local residents visited his ranch frequently. Eli Jackson also shared his blessings with those less fortunate than himself and he began to have an impact on people that he helped. Furthermore, Eli Jackson was appointed Hidalgo County Commissioner in 1869 by General Joseph J. Reynolds and he was an elected Hidalgo County Commissioner from 1890 to 1893. (17)

Because of his generosity, Eli Jackson's Ranch became known throughout the country and people from different cultures and backgrounds came seeking the Jackson Ranch for the good deeds bestowed on everyone that came to visit. Hence, at the time when slavery was present in the Southern states of the country, many escaped slaves heard of the Eli Jackson Ranch and they made their way there. Before long, the Eli Jackson Ranch became, in effect, part of the Underground Railroad.

In 1893, W. H. Chatfield, in his survey of the Rio Grande Valley, wrote, "Jackson's Ranch is a Negro settlement which has grown up from run-away slaves having settled there and intermarried with Mexicans. Eli Jackson, the principal man of the settlement and from whom it is named, is County Commissioner for the Second Precinct and occupies a prominent place in the affairs of Hidalgo County." (18)

Mexico had outlawed slavery throughout the land in the 1820s and many refugees headed south to cross the river and escape being captured. However, not all runaway slaves fled into Mexico; many runaway slaves stayed at the Eli Jackson Ranch where they were gladly welcomed. Eli Jackson's Ranch provided runaway slaves with refuge, food, and shelter, which kept them from having to travel any farther. In fact, anyone seeking sanctuary was well received and it is possible that many visitors who experienced the benevolent hospitality given to all travelers, including Negroes and Indians, came to

stay at Jackson Ranch. The Jackson family's known hospitality, kindness, and immense generosity were traits inherited from generation to generation, even to this day.

Eli Jackson died in 1911 at his ranch house and is believed to be buried at the Eli Jackson Cemetery in an unmarked grave located next to the grave of his father. Eli Jackson and his father, Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865), were said to be buried at the foot of a tree (tree was struck down by lightning sometime around 1988) and their graves are now marked by lilies that were planted in lieu of headstones because the continuous flooding of the area washed away their markers. Flooding occurred periodically prior to 1909 and this continuous flooding resulted in people planting crinum lilies at gravesites to indicate where their loved ones were buried.

**Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson (1875-1929).** Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson was the son of Eli Jackson (1832-1911) and Elizabeth Kerr and the grandson of Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865). He was born on January 29, 1875 in Hidalgo County, Texas (19) and was raised on Eli Jackson's Ranch, located along the banks of the Rio Grande. Nathaniel Jackson, or as everyone came to know him, "Polo" Jackson inherited his father's ranch and continued to be a farmer like his father, Eli Jackson (1832-1911); and like his grandfather, Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865). Coincidentally, he also registered his cattle brand by using his father, Eli Jackson's mark, EJ in 1908. (20)

Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson married a Mexican woman of Aztec ancestry by the name of Eugenia Villanueva on August 31, 1907 (21) and they had four children: Adela Jackson (1899-1992), Angelita Jackson, Federico Jackson (1893-1920), and Herlinda Jackson; and they adopted a daughter and named her Audelia Jackson. (22) Nathaniel

“Polo” Jackson also raised two stepchildren from Eugenia Villanueva’s previous marriages.

Continuing with tradition, Nathaniel “Polo” Jackson worked on his ranch, raised his family, and was well respected in the community. Aside from farming, the six foot-tall, 300 pound Nathaniel “Polo” Jackson had another job working as the Hidalgo County Jailer in the early 1900s. At this time, a jailer was needed because crime was increasing due to the amount of settlers arriving daily after the building of the railroad to the Rio Grande Valley in 1904. (23)

Land was very important for growth and development in the Rio Grande Valley; consequently, disputes started over ownership of land. Before long, these unresolved disputes led to murder and also resulted in false signatures (forgery) in transfers of real estate deeds. Although much can be said pertaining to the expansion and settlement of the Rio Grande Valley, it can be noted that much of the Jackson Ranch, land purchased in 1857 by Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865), was no longer in the hands of the Jackson heirs after 1897. (24)

In 1920, Federico Jackson, son of Nathaniel “Polo” Jackson, was traveling home with his cousin, Paulino Casares, son of Sabino Casares, when they were ambushed and murdered. It is believed that they were killed because they refused to sell their land even though they were being pressured into selling it. Federico Jackson and Paulino Casares went missing for about a week; finally, family members contacted a “*curandera*” or fortune teller for assistance. The fortune teller said that the search party was close to where the two young men were located. Once their search trail ended, the search party needed to travel a few yards off McColl Road in south McAllen; and there, they would

find Federico Jackson and Paulino Casares. Unfortunately, the fortune teller was right. Federico Jackson and Paulino Casares were found lying face down next to each other with gunshot wounds to the backs of their bodies and their hats had been switched to create confusion. Federico Jackson and Paulino Casares (July 18, 1893-December 29, 1920) were born on the same day, at the same time, in the same house to two different women. They were not twins although many believed they were. The 27-year-old cousins died on the same day and were buried together in a grave marked with two hearts at the Eli Jackson Cemetery. (25)

Nine years after Federico Jackson and Paulino Casares were murdered, Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson was also murdered somewhere along the banks of the Rio Grande close to his home on November 21, 1929. (26) His daughter, Adela Jackson (Reyna) and her father-in-law were summoned to the banks of the Rio Grande after gunshots were heard. There, they saw Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's hat floating in the water and his body was lying next to it. After he was pulled out of the water, it was determined that he died of two gunshots to the back of the head while he was fishing. It is believed that his murder was committed by bandits that were after his land as Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's life had been threatened before with a gunshot wound to his leg. Further speculation led to the belief that his murder was a result of his job as county jailer. Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson worked and assisted the county sheriff at the Hidalgo County Jail when the State of Texas allowed counties to carry out their own death sentences. (27) Nonetheless, the district attorney conducted an investigation on Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's murder and an arrest was made. Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson was buried at the Eli Jackson Cemetery in an unmarked triple grave, according to Jackson (Reyna) family members. That triple grave

is where his only son, Federico Jackson and his nephew, Paulino Casares, were buried in 1920 after they had been murdered.

**Eugenia Villanueva (Jackson) (1870-1948).** Eugenia Villanueva (Jackson), wife of Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson is buried at the Eli Jackson Cemetery, according to family descendants and newly discovered family documents (sp.-*escuela* or funeral home announcement). Many people believed that she was buried in the Donna Cemetery and it has been recorded as such in various documents found in archives and surveys. However, in 1992, family members came across documents that De Leon Funeral Home had printed and issued to her family members and relatives for notification of funeral arrangements. The death announcement issued stated that Eugenia Villanueva (Jackson) was laid to rest at the Eli Jackson Cemetery on August 3, 1948. (28)

**Adela Jackson (Reyna) (1899-1992).** Adela Jackson was the eldest daughter of Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson (1875-1929) and Eugenia Villanueva (1870-1948). Her brother was Federico Jackson (1893-1920) and her sisters were Angelita Jackson and Herlinda Jackson. Also, she had a sister that her parents adopted in 1925 and named Audelia Jackson. Her mother, Eugenia Villanueva, had two children from previous marriages and they were a daughter named Santos De Leon; and a son named Jose Yarrito. As earlier Jacksons had done, Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson raised his own family with the same religious beliefs, hospitable qualities, and enormous generosity that his family was known for possessing.

When Adela Jackson was 18 years old, her father Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson had her register her own cattle brand AJ in 1917 (29). Ten years later, as Adela Jackson was working on her father's ranch, she met a young man by the name of Wuenceslao Reyna,



Jr. They did not court each other at all as it is common now. Their courtship was done when they talked to each other as they worked in her father Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's fields. Perhaps at that time, courting was not a very important aspect of marriage. What was important in marriage was finding that soul mate that would respect you, take care of the home, and provide for the family; it had nothing to do with a fairy tale marriage. From the beginning they knew that they were meant for one another; and after a short time, he finally had enough courage to ask her parents for her hand in marriage. Adela Jackson's parents imposed one condition on the marriage proposal. The condition was that he could marry their daughter as long as she was not obligated to change her last name; after all, he was not gaining a daughter, he was getting a wife. (30)

Adela Jackson married Wuenceslao Reyna, Jr. on April 11, 1927 (31) and they had three children. Their children were two daughters named Emila Reyna and Elvira Reyna and one son, named Edelmiro Reyna (1938-1996). Adela Jackson (Reyna) raised her children on her father Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's ranch while her husband, Wuenceslao Reyna, Jr. worked the land. Adela Jackson (Reyna) was the last remaining child of Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson who resided on the last known tract of land from the original Jackson Ranch founded in 1857 by Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865). After Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson was murdered in 1929, his widow and surviving children (Federico Jackson had been murdered in 1920) feared for their lives and they boarded up the Jackson house and left the Valley for about three years. When they returned, their house had been burned down by vandals and they had to live in *jacales* and adobe homes while their frame (lumber) houses were being built.

By 1948, Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's children were all grown up and some were even married and were raising families of their own in other parts of the country. On August 3, 1948, their mother, Eugenia Villanueva (Jackson), died and was buried at the Eli Jackson Cemetery (32) next to her husband, Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson (1875-1929) and their only son, Federico Jackson (1893-1920). Thereafter, her daughters Angelita Jackson, Herlinda Jackson, Audelia Jackson (adopted daughter), and Santos De Leon returned with their families to California. Her son, Jose Yarrito moved his family to Mexico, as did Federico Jackson's widow, Clarita Zamora, and their two daughters. Adela Jackson (Reyna) was the only Jackson left at her father Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's home (Eli Jackson's Ranch) after 1948.

Adela Jackson (Reyna) and her husband raised their children on the ranch and in the surrounding community. Soon, their children were grown up and before long; they married and started families of their own. Adela Jackson (Reyna)'s eldest daughter, Emilia Reyna Cruz and her family moved to California, as did her only son, Edelmiro Reyna (1938-1996) and his family. Her second daughter, Elvira Reyna Cardenas and family moved to the City of Pharr, Texas. Adela Jackson and her husband, Wuenceslao Reyna, Jr., remained at Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson's Ranch house once their children moved away; up until the time they had to relocate their home because of devastating weather. In 1967, when Hurricane Beulah unleashed her wrath upon the entire Rio Grande Valley, Adela Jackson's home was inundated in six feet of water as was the Jackson Church and the other homes in the area. (33) Land owners had to use boats to reach their homes and salvage some of their personal belongs. Once the waters receded, Adela Jackson (Reyna) and her husband moved to Pharr, next door to their daughter,

Elvira Reyna Cardenas, who is the mother of eight girls and three boys. Though she made her home in Pharr, Texas, Adela Jackson (Reyna) continued to maintain her father's land and that land included the Eli Jackson Cemetery. (By the late 1990s, all of the remaining Jackson land, except the Eli Jackson Cemetery, had passed out of family ownership unaccountably.)

For many years, Adela Jackson (Reyna), her husband, and her grandchildren made the five-minute drive to the Eli Jackson Cemetery where they inspected the cemetery for repairs, picked up the trash, and maintained the entire cemetery site. However, in 1973, Adela Jackson (Reyna) became a widow when her husband, Wuenceslao Reyna, Jr., died and was buried at her family cemetery, the Eli Jackson Cemetery. Nonetheless, she still continued to maintain the cemetery with the help of her grandchildren up until her death in 1992. Adela Jackson (Reyna) was buried beside her husband at the Eli Jackson Cemetery in a double grave where her mother, Eugenia Villanueva (Jackson) was buried.

**Significance of the Eli Jackson Ranch.** Eli Jackson was the son of Nathaniel Jackson (a white man), and Matilda Hicks (a black woman) and according to the U S Census of 1860, Eli Jackson and his brothers and sisters were considered mulattos. (34) However, neither Nathaniel Jackson (1800-1865) nor Eli Jackson discriminated against anyone that they encountered. They helped everyone out, regardless of race, religion, or creed and it was through their generosity that many travelers would stop by and visit the Jackson Ranch. Union soldiers from the Cavalry Camp at Edinburg (present Hidalgo) were welcomed and at times, these visitors stayed permanently and even married many of the women at Jackson Ranch.

**The Eli Jackson Cemetery.** The Eli Jackson Cemetery was established strictly as a family cemetery by Eli Jackson in 1865 (earliest gravesite reported date). However, Eli Jackson was known for his hospitality and he permitted boarders, guests, and neighbors to be buried (free of charge) on the family grounds since most people did not have a place to lay their loved ones to rest. Most of the burials at the Eli Jackson Cemetery are of Mexican American or African American descent. Headstones are carved with religious features such as crosses, the Virgin Mary, and engraved pictures of Jesus Christ. Some graves are decorated with shrubs, rose bushes, vases, and small plaques; hence, throughout the cemetery, headstones vary from size and decorations. Also, a couple of WWII and Vietnam Veterans are buried at the Eli Jackson Cemetery but their family members have abandoned their graves and have failed to get them headstones with the proper recognition they so valiantly attained. At least 90% of the graves at the Eli Jackson Cemetery were abandoned by family members once a burial occurred, leaving the maintenance to the Adela Jackson (Reyna) heirs. (Adela Jackson (Reyna) was the daughter of Nathaniel "Polo" Jackson and the granddaughter of Eli Jackson.)

**Roads.** When other settlers began to arrive in the Rio Grande Valley, roads were soon established to lead travelers directly to the Eli Jackson Ranch. Jackson Road and "I" Road were the two main roads frequently used by travelers to reach the Eli Jackson Ranch and these roads stretched from the Old Military Highway (now U S 281 E) to the present day City of Edinburg, Texas. Area ranchers used these roads to carry supplies to other ranches and farms in the surrounding areas. Both Jackson Road and "I" Road allowed travelers to arrive at Eli Jackson's house by using the Right of Way access that leads to the Eli Jackson Cemetery by driving on the levee (present adjacent landowner

[#1 & #2 on survey map] planted trees, plants, and placed various personal belongings on the Right of Way to keep commuters from passing too close to his house; landowner is aware of existing Right of Way and will remove his belongings so that access can be available).

**Wood crosses.** There is **an old wooden cross** located by a tree on the upper west side of the Eli Jackson Cemetery. Upon further inspection of this particular wooden cross, one can determine that it is made from a unique style cut (perhaps military style cut) and that it does not resemble any regular handmade crosses that people would typically make. It is possible that the soldiers that visited at Jackson Ranch or former soldiers were buried in that section of the cemetery but no documentation was ever kept pertaining to graves earlier than 1896. However, it was known that the entire section where that solitary cross is now located was at one time covered with similar wooden crosses. In 1976, there were four wooden crosses still visible; however, erosion and destruction by the natural elements (such as hurricanes) have caused three of the crosses to crumble. As of November 2003, only one unmarked wooden cross remains standing.

**Brewster Family.** The Brewster family graves are another part of the Eli Jackson Cemetery that draws attention to local researchers and historical site tourists that often stop by. Union veteran, Dr. W.T.G. Brewster of Connecticut (1835-1896) married Minerva, daughter of Nathaniel Jackson's stepdaughter, Emily; and later, Brewster purchased two shares of Nathaniel Jackson's estate and lived next door to the Eli Jackson Ranch. During an influenza epidemic in 1912, four members of the family died within two months. The first recorded death was that of 20-year-old Hulda Brewster who died on April 9, 1912. Her brother, 24-year-old James Brewster, died on May 28. Two other

children died within hours of one another on May 15 and 16. According to Jackson family history, one family member, 18-year-old Ida, died in the morning and was buried within hours. No sooner was that burial over when another Brewster family member, 7-year-old Johnnie, died and he was buried within hours from the previous family member. (35) Eli Jackson permitted the Brewster family to be buried at the Eli Jackson Cemetery since they were neighbors and there are eleven marked Brewster graves there. As a result, the cemetery was soon referred to as the Eli Jackson Brewster Cemetery. However, the Brewster Cemetery (Brewster-Bravo Cemetery) is located at Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge, about three miles east of the Eli Jackson Cemetery.

**Maintenance.** The Eli Jackson Cemetery has been maintained by Adela Jackson's (Reyna) descendants. Adela Jackson (Reyna) was the last known Jackson to reside at the Eli Jackson Ranch. Her children and grandchildren now maintain the grounds and try to keep the cemetery in good condition. However, erosion and damage done by visitors are major factors in the deterioration of the cemetery. Enrique Resto, Sr. and his son, Enrique Resto, Jr. (husband and son of one of Adela Jackson's granddaughters) inspect the Eli Jackson Cemetery on a regular basis, for the cemetery is in dire need of maintenance; especially, since most graves have been abandoned and lack maintenance by their own family members. The cemetery maintenance and inspection includes removing faded flowers from graves, picking up trash, trimming hedges and weeds, terracing graves where the land has shifted (at times, it is possible to see what lies beneath) and mending broken fences. The Eli Jackson Cemetery is going through a slow and gradual renovation process and it is being accomplished in a timely and affordable manner thanks to Adela Jackson's (Reyna) descendants.



The Jacksons were known for their hospitality and it is known that they never charged for any of the burial plots. When Adela Jackson remained at her father's ranch, many people came to her house to ask for compassion and for a place to bury their loved ones since they could not afford burial fees imposed by other area cemeteries. Since the plots were free, almost everyone wanted to be buried at the Eli Jackson Cemetery and soon it was filled with people that were not Jackson descendants. People were taking advantage of Adela Jackson (Reyna) and once funeral services were completed, these graves were immediately abandoned by those family members that had requested a plot. Thus, the only time that any of these family members ever returned to pay their respects was when someone else had died and they wanted a place to bury them. As the cemetery became full, it was necessary to close it for future interments (burials) other than for Adela Jackson's (Reyna) descendants. **The Eli Jackson Cemetery was registered as CLOSED at the Hidalgo County Courthouse on May 1, 2001 (36)** and area funeral homes were informed that interments (burials) are no longer permitted at the Eli Jackson Cemetery.

**Surveys.** The Eli Jackson Cemetery has been surveyed at least four times. The first survey of the Eli Jackson Cemetery was conducted by Dale Swartzmiller and Joe Fallin, of the McAllen Genealogy Society, on November 5, 1976. The second time, it was re-surveyed by Ramon Montalvo and Fran Isbell in 1988. The third time the Eli Jackson Cemetery was surveyed was on November 1, 2003 by Diana Cardenas for the completion of a historical marker application. Finally, a completed survey and census map of the Eli Jackson Cemetery was conducted on November 23, 2003 by Diana Cardenas and Valerie Resto.

## ELI JACKSON CEMETERY FOOTNOTES

01. Hidalgo County Clerk. Edinburg, TX. Deed Records. WD A, p315. Ed and Mary Smith to Nathaniel Jackson. 5535 acres. 27 July 1857.
02. Hidalgo County Appraisal District, Edinburg, TX. Tax Records. Eli Jackson Cemetery Census [Site] Map. Nov. 25, 2003
03. Cardenas, Diana and Valerie Resto. Eli Jackson Cemetery Census and Map Survey. Nov.23, 2003, and Hidalgo County Clerk. Deed Records. Book C, p119. Partition of lands inherited from Nathaniel Jackson by Eli, Martha, Matilda Jackson; Dr. W.T.G. Brewster and Pedro Garza. Dec. 3, 1878.
04. Swartzmiller, Dale and Joe Fallin. Census of the Eli Jackson-Brewster Cemetery, McAllen Genealogical Society, McAllen TX. Nov. 5, 1976. This includes a documented family genealogy.
05. Deed records. Cited above. WD A, p315. Smith to Jackson. July 27, 1857. A Spanish *vara* measures 33.3 inches.
06. Daily Review, Edinburg, TX. Special County Centennial Issue, 1952. "Nathaniel Jackson, 1858" by Mary Alice Ramirez.
07. Hidalgo County Clerk, Edinburg, TX. Marks & Brands Book A (1852-1865).
08. Hidalgo County Historical Commission. Historical Marker Application. "Jackson Ranch Church" by Frances W. Isbell. McAllen TX, 1982.
09. Chatfield, W. H. Twin Cities of the Border. New Orleans: E. P. Brandao, 1893. Reprinted by Brownsville Historical Association, Brownsville TX, 1959. P 42b.
10. HCHC marker application, "Jackson Ranch Church." Cited above.
11. Index to 1880 Census, Hidalgo County TX, compiled by Virginia Gilkey Stinson as part of my personal Bicentennial project for my community. I listed heads of families only. [Listed by ranches. Only two Jackson families were included, those of Eli and Martin.]
12. Deed Records. Cited above. Book C, p119. Dec. 3, 1878. Partition of Jackson Ranch.
13. Swartzmiller. Cited above.
14. Deed Records. Book C, p. 119, cited above.

15. Hidalgo County Clerk. Cited above. Marriage License Records. Book B, 1868-1883. P 217. Eli Jackson m. Elizabeth Kerr, Nov 11, 1877.
16. Hidalgo County Brands. Cited above. Book C (1866-1896)
17. Stambaugh, J. Lee. "History of Hidalgo County Elected Officials 1852-1963." Reprinted from issues of the Pharr Press. Pharr TX, July 1963. Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Reynolds, commander of the Dept. of Texas during Reconstruction 1867-1870 and assistant commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau, appointed over 400 Unionists and Republicans to state offices. New Handbook of Texas in 6 vols. Austin: Texas State Historical Assn., 1996. "Joseph Jones Reynolds", Vol. 5, pp. 150-151.
18. Chatfield. Cited above.
19. Swartzmiller. Cited above.
20. Brand books. Book C, cited above.
21. Marriage Records. Cited above. Polo Jackson m. Eugenia Villanueva. Aug. 31, 1907.
22. Adela Jackson Reyna. Interview, Jackson Ranch 1976-1992. Pharr, TX. This and subsequent family history is from Mrs. Reyna.
23. Allhands, J. L. Railroads to the Rio. Salado TX: Anson Jones Press; 1960. P 59. Arrival of railroad 1904.
24. Marker application. Cited above.
25. Reyna. Cited above. This story of the two cousins has been retold by various Jackson descendants. Also, Hidalgo County TX. Inquest Records, p 1, Jan 2, 1921.
26. Swartzmiller. Cited above. "The Jackson Family of Alabama and Texas." From interview with Mrs. Maynor Jackson Lopez, McAllen TX Aug. 12, 1976. Also Inquest Records, cited above. Book 4, p28, Nov. 21, 1929.
27. Robertson, Brian. Wild Horse Desert: The Heritage of South Texas. Edinburg, TX: New Santander Press, 1985. P233.
28. DeLeon Funeral Home, Pharr, Texas. Death announcement, Eugenia Villanueva Jackson, August 3, 1948.
29. Brand Books. Cited above.

30. Marriage records. Cited above. Uvencio Reyna, Jr. m. Adela Jackson. April 11, 1927. Archives and county records show Uvencio Reyna, Jr. instead of Wuenceslao Reyna, Jr.
31. Reyna. Cited above.
32. Marriage Records. Cited above.
33. Marker Application. Cited above.
34. Swartzmiller. Cited above.
35. Swartzmiller. Cited above.
36. Cardenas, Diana. Eli Jackson Cemetery. Document submitted for official record of closing of the Eli Jackson Cemetery on May 2001.

# **Eli Jackson Cemetery Bibliography**

## **BOOKS and PAMPHLETS**

Allhands, J.L. Railroads to the Rio. Salado TX: Anson Jones Press, 1960.

Chatfield, W. H. Twin Cities of the Border. New Orleans: E. P. Brandao, 1893. Reprinted by Brownsville Historical Association, Brownsville TX, 1959.

Hidalgo County Historical Commission. Historical marker application. "Jackson Ranch Church" by Frances W. Isbell. McAllen TX, 1982.

New Handbook of Texas in six volumes. Austin TX: Texas State Historical Association, 1996.

Robertson, Brian. Wild Horse Desert; the heritage of South Texas. Edinburg TX: New Santander Press, 1985.

Stambaugh, J. Lee. "History of Hidalgo County elected officials, 1852-1963." Reprinted from pages of the Pharr Press. Pharr TX, July 1963.

## **DOCUMENTS**

Cardenas, Diana and Valerie Resto. Eli Jackson Cemetery Census and Map Survey, Hidalgo County TX. Nov. 23, 2003.

DeLeon Funeral Home, Pharr TX. Death announcement, Eugenia Villanueva Jackson, August 31, 1948.

Hidalgo County Appraisal District, Edinburg TX. Tax Records. Eli Jackson Cemetery Census [Site] Map. Nov. 23, 2003.

Hidalgo County Clerk, Edinburg TX. Deed Records.  
Inquest Records.  
Marks & Brands Books.  
Marriage License Records.

## **ELI JACKSON CEMETERY BIBLIOGRAPHY (Continued)**

Index to 1880 Census, Hidalgo County TX, compiled by Virginia Gilkey Stinson as part of my personal Bicentennial project for my community. I listed heads of families only. [Listed by ranches. Only two Jackson families were included, those of Eli and Martin.]

Swartzmiller, Dale and Joe Fallin. Census of the Eli Jackson-Brewster Cemetery, McAllen Genealogical Society, McAllen TX. Nov. 5, 1976. This includes a documented family genealogy.

### **NEWSPAPERS**

Daily Review, Edinburg TX. Special County Centennial Issue. 1952.  
"Nathaniel Jackson, 1858" by Mary Alice Ramirez.

### **INTERVIEWS**

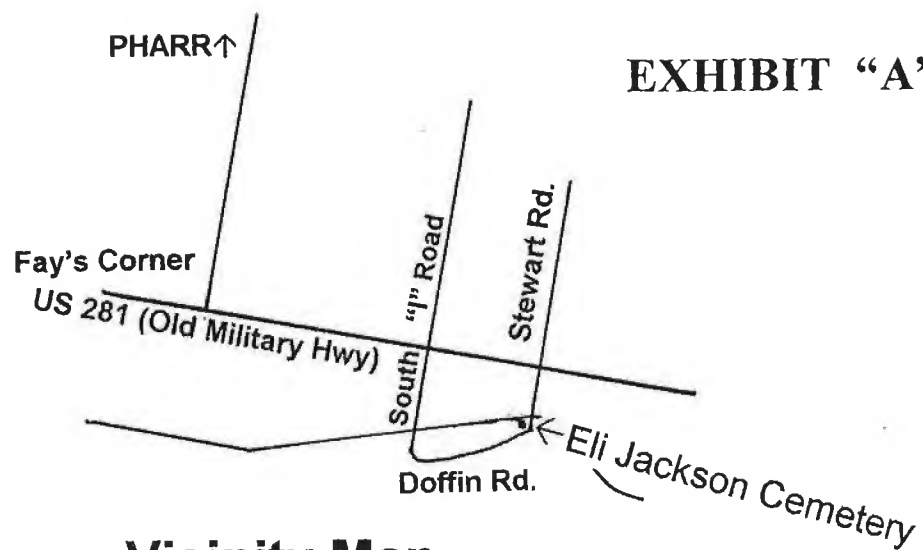
Lopez, Maynor Jackson. Interview by Dale Swartzmiller. McAllen TX, Aug. 12, 1976.

Reyna, Adela Jackson. Interview by Diana Cardenas and other family members, Jackson Ranch, San Juan, TX. 1976-1992.



16605

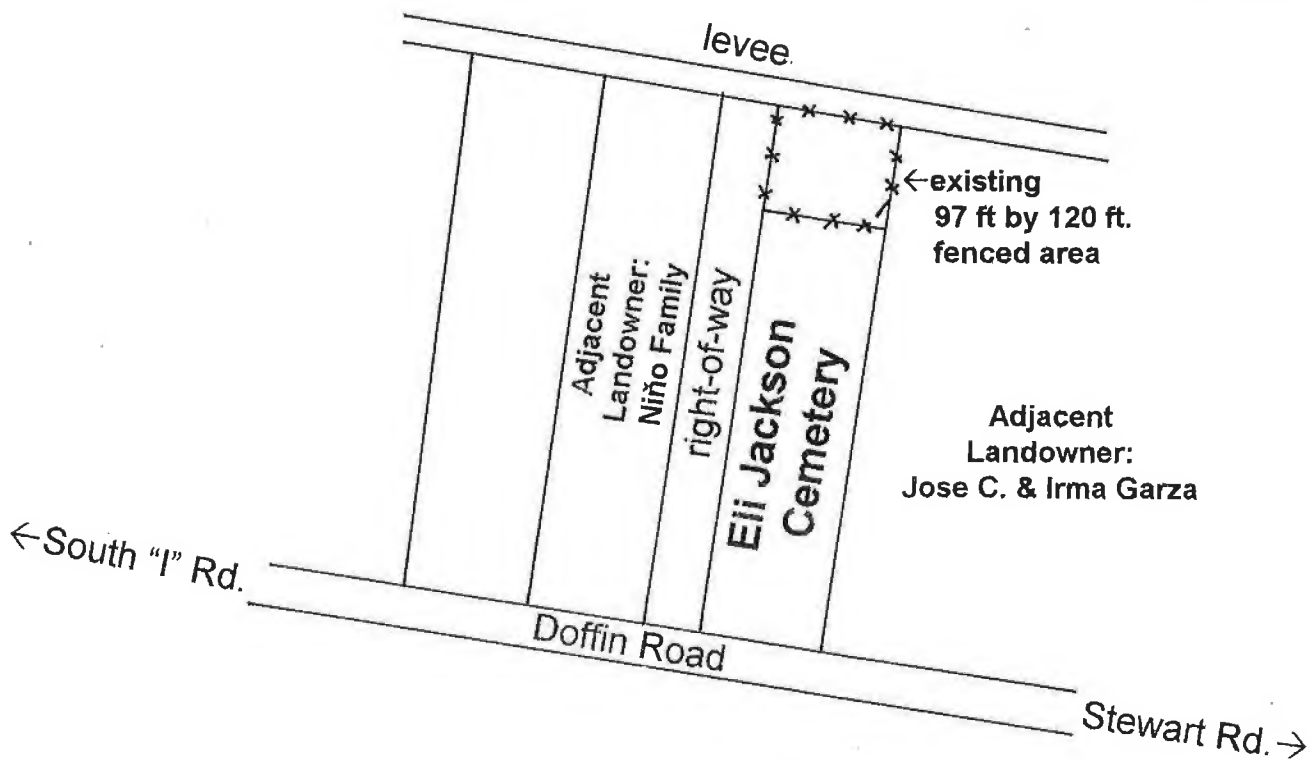
# EXHIBIT "A"



Vicinity Map



no scale



Map adopted from data provided by the applicant.

Located in Porcion 71, Hidalgo County, Texas.

UTM: 14 Northing 81550, Easting: 85450

Latitude: 26.05.10.5 N Longitude: 98.10.56.5 W (NAD27).

## ELI JACKSON CEMETERY

Also known as Eli Jackson Brewster Cemetery and Jackson

Family Cemetery

Cemetery No. HG-C072

Hidalgo County

JOB NO. 16605 COUNTY Hidalgo

TITLE ELI JACKSON CEMETERY

SIZE HTC Medallion and 24"x16" w/ post

PRICE \$950

TO BE ATTACHED TO:

Cemetery ID # HG-C072

HTC Designation ☒

Year: 2005

HPD	5/13/05	Received
<i>h</i>	<i>5.31.05</i>	Receipt acknowledged
		Information requested
		Received:
<i>h</i>	<i>6.19.05</i>	Evaluated
		Sent to HC, if applicable
<i>h</i>	<i>6.22.05</i>	Letter of approval
<i>h</i>	<i>9.23.05</i>	Check received THC# <i>8086022</i> Amount <i>950.</i> Addt'l check received THC#                      Amount Addt'l check received THC#                      Amount
<i>WH</i>	<i>11.23.05</i>	Inscription written
<i>h</i>	<i>11.29.05</i>	Inscription sent for approval
<i>WH</i>	<i>4.10.06</i>	Revisions: <i>430.06</i>
		Highway permission secured (if necessary) <input type="checkbox"/> YES Pharr District
<i>h</i>	<i>8.1.06</i>	Order to foundry o RTHL Medallion #
<i>h</i>	<i>8.29.06</i>	Proof checked
<i>h</i>	<i>10.16.06</i>	Notice of shipment Billed: <i>9.26.06</i> Shipped: <i>10.9.06</i>
		Clean/Atlas Atlas #

**CHC Contact:**

Rick DeJulio  
707 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
McAllen, 78501  
956/682-2400  
*texican@rgv.rr.com*

☒ All ☐ Payment ☐ Ship

**Copies to:**

Diana Cardenas  
100 East St. John Drive  
Pharr, 78577  
956/821-9653

☒ All ☐ Payment ☒ Ship

Audrey Hazlett, Treasurer  
Hidalgo CHC  
515 South Kansas Street  
Weslaco, 78596

☐ All ☒ Payment ☐ Ship

☐ All ☐ Payment ☐ Ship



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. Box 12276 • Austin, TX 78711-2276

## HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY EVALUATION FORM

Title: **Eli Jackson Cemetery**

Address: ~~7.4 mi. S~~ on Doffin Road, *7.4 mi. S*  
City: Pharr

County: Hidalgo

Job #: 16605

Size: X: 16x24 w post

Codes: GY, AA

Year: 2005

Meets significance & documentation requirements: ☒ Yes ☐ No

**Historical Evaluation:** Tradition holds the cemetery (aka Eli Jackson-Brewster Cemetery and Jackson Family Cemetery) dates to 1865 and the burial of Nathaniel Jackson; the oldest marked grave dates to 1896, but the area has been subject to much flooding over the years, possibly obscuring earlier graves. Nathaniel Jackson was an Anglo-American planter who came to the area in the 1850s from Alabama with his African American wife and their mulatto children. The Jacksons developed a successful farming operation and, according to family history, assisted runaway slaves during the Civil War. The Jackson were a generous family, always willing to assist others, and a separate community developed on their land. Graves in the cemetery include those of Jacksons, Brewsters (a neighboring family) and other early residents. The cemetery was officially closed to additional burials in 2001.

**Cemetery History Evaluation:** Interior fencing; large number of crosses.

**Recommended for HTC marker:** ☒ yes ☐ no

**Staff recommendation:** ☒ approval ☐ rejection

**Staff evaluation by:** Dan K. Utley and Gerron S. Hite

**Date:** 6/19/2005

### NOTE TO RESEARCHERS:

**Please cross-reference with HTC files for this cemetery.**



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

June 22, 2005

Audrey Hazlett, Treasurer  
Hidalgo CHC  
515 South Kansas Street  
Weslaco, TX 78596

RE: ELI JACKSON CEMETERY  
Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and 24"x16" plaque w/ post  
Job # 16605, Hidalgo County

Dear Ms. Hazlett:

I am pleased to notify you that the Texas Historical Commission has approved the above-referenced topic for a Historic Texas Cemetery Marker.

Payment for the marker, in the amount of \$950.00, is now due. Please complete and return the enclosed payment form at your earliest convenience. Once payment for the marker is received, your application will be placed in line to have the marker inscription written; the inscription cannot be written until after funds have been received. When the text is prepared, a copy will be sent to you and any parties listed below for review and approval.

The Texas Historical Commission congratulates you on your efforts to record and preserve Texas history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dan K. Utley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" being particularly prominent.

Dan K. Utley  
Chief Historian  
History Programs Division  
[dan.utley@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:dan.utley@thc.state.tx.us)

pc: Rick DeJulio, Hidalgo CHC  
Diana Cardenas



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Rick DeJulio, 956/682-2400  
Diana Cardenas, 956/821-9653

FROM: Linda C. Henderson

RE: Eli Jackson Cemetery  
Hidalgo County, Job # 16605

DATE: November 29, 2005

Enclosed is the proposed inscription for the aforementioned marker. Please review it for accuracy, verify the proposed location, and check names, dates and facts. As you review the inscription, please note the following:

- Because this is for an Official Texas Historical Marker, the final wording, including punctuation, style and grammar, is up to the Texas Historical Commission.
- If you have corrections to recommend, please make them on the attached copy and return it to me. We ask that you *not* type a new version of the inscription.
- If you suggest the addition of new information not included in the narrative history, we will need a typed addendum to the file with appropriate documentation and notes.
- Inscription space is limited, so any suggested additions should be accompanied by suggested omissions.
- The draft you received is a working copy for the foundry's use; the right-hand margin will be justified on the finished marker.
- If the requested changes are minor and agreed upon by all parties, no additional approval letter will be sent. Therefore, please consider and proof the text carefully before sending it back to the THC.
- We cannot mention anyone who has not been deceased for 10 years or more.
- **Please do not set a dedication date until you have received the marker. Due to the many variables in the process, we cannot guarantee delivery dates.**

The marker cannot be ordered until we have approvals from **each person** noted above. Please confer with each other to ensure consensus and to minimize the number of rewrites, which can slow the marker process for you and for others.

I will be your contact person for all inscription questions, so please contact me at the agency address or at the following email: linda.henderson@thc.state.tx.us \* Phone: 512/463-5851 \* Fax: 512/475-3122

**Notes:** Please let me know if you have any questions.

Texas Historical Commission staff (LCH), 11/23/2005

Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and 24" x 16" interpretive plaque with post

Hidalgo County (Job #16605) Subject GY, AA (Atlas ) UTM: 14 581694E 2885570N

Location: Pharr, 7.4 mi. S on Doffin Rd. near Stewart Rd

### ELI JACKSON CEMETERY

IN 1857, NATHANIEL JACKSON CAME FROM ALABAMA AND ESTABLISHED A RANCH IN THIS AREA. A FORMER SLAVEOWNER, JACKSON, WHO WAS WHITE, CAME WITH HIS WIFE MATILDA HICKS, WHO WAS BLACK, THEIR CHILDREN AND HIS FREED SLAVES. ON HIS 5,500-ACRE RANCH, JACKSON RAISED LIVESTOCK AND GREW VEGETABLES, COTTON AND SUGARCANE. HE ALSO ESTABLISHED A CHAPEL THAT SERVED FAMILY AND FRIENDS. HE WAS KNOWN FOR HIS GENEROSITY AND HOSPITALITY, AND MANY, INCLUDING RUNAWAY SLAVES, CAME TO THE RANCH IN NEED OF LODGING AND OTHER RESOURCES.

UPON JACKSON'S DEATH IN 1865, HIS HEIRS DIVIDED THE PROPERTY. THE SHARE TO HIS SON ELI INCLUDED THIS SITE, THE FAMILY CEMETERY. ~~HE~~ AND HIS WIFE, ELIZABETH KERR, AND THEIR CHILDREN CONTINUED THE FAMILY TRADITION OF HOSPITALITY. ELI JACKSON SERVED AS A COUNTY OFFICIAL, AS DID HIS SON NATHANIEL "POLO" JACKSON. POLO'S DAUGHTER ADELA OPERATED THE RANCH AND CARED FOR THE CEMETERY UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1992.

TODAY, THE ~~ELI~~ JACKSON FAMILY CEMETERY REPRESENTS THE EARLY AREA RANCHING COMMUNITIES. THE BURIAL GROUND IS A TIE TO THE JACKSON FAMILY, ~~AS WELL AS TO~~ AND IN THE Past THEIR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS WHO SHARE THIS AS THEIR FINAL RESTING PLACE.

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY - 2005

MAR 10 2006

Check one and sign:

- ☐ I approve text as written. Proceed with order.  
☒ I approve text with minor revisions as noted. Proceed with order.  
☐ I request these revisions and a new copy of text.

Signed:

*Diana Cardenas*



Texas Historical Commission staff (LCH), 11/23/2005

Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and 24" x 16" interpretive plaque with post

Hidalgo County (Job #16605) Subject GY, AA (Atlas ) UTM: 14 581694E 2885570N

Location: Pharr, 7.4 mi. S on Doffin Rd. near Stewart Rd

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UPON JACKSON'S DEATH IN 1865, HIS HEIRS DIVIDED THE PROPERTY. THE SHARE TO HIS SON ELI INCLUDED THIS SITE, THE FAMILY CEMETERY. ~~HE AND HIS WIFE, ELIZABETH KERR, AND THEIR CHILDREN CONTINUED THE FAMILY TRADITION OF HOSPITALITY.~~ ELI JACKSON SERVED AS A COUNTY OFFICIAL, AS DID HIS SON NATHANIEL "POLO" JACKSON. POLO'S DAUGHTER ADELA OPERATED THE RANCH AND CARED FOR THE CEMETERY UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1992..

TODAY, THE <sup>ELI</sup>JACKSON FAMILY CEMETERY REPRESENTS THE EARLY AREA RANCHING COMMUNITIES. THE BURIAL GROUND IS A TIE TO THE JACKSON FAMILY, ~~AS WELL AS TO~~ and in the past to ~~THEIR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS WHO SHARE THIS AS THEIR FINAL RESTING PLACE.~~

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY - 2005

Check one and sign:

☒ I approve text as written. Proceed with order.  
☒ I approve text with minor revisions as noted. Proceed with order.  
☐ I request these revisions and a new copy of text.

Signed: Rick Defuria



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Rick DeJulio, 956/682-2400  
Diana Cardenas, 956/821-9653

FROM: Linda C. Henderson

RE: Eli Jackson Cemetery  
Hidalgo County, Job # 16605

DATE: April 30, 2006

Enclosed is the *revised* inscription for the aforementioned marker. Please review it for accuracy, verify the proposed location, and check names, dates and facts. Please note the following:

- Because this is for an Official Texas Historical Marker, the final wording is up to the Texas Historical Commission; we will, however, consider any substantive changes you might suggest.
- If you have corrections to recommend, please make them on the attached copy and return it to me. We ask that you *not* type a new version of the inscription.
- If you suggest adding information not included in the narrative history, we will need a typed addendum to the file with appropriate documentation and notes.
- Please keep in mind that the inscription space is limited, so any suggested additions should be accompanied by suggested omissions.
- The inscription draft you received is a working copy for the foundry's use; the right-hand margin will be justified on the finished marker.
- If the requested changes are minor and agreed upon by all parties, no additional approval letter will be sent. Therefore, please consider and proof the text carefully before sending it back to the THC.
- **Please do not set a dedication date until you have received the marker. Due to the many variables in the process, we cannot guarantee delivery dates.**

The marker cannot be ordered until we have approvals from each person noted above. Please confer with each other to ensure consensus and to minimize the number of rewrites, which can slow the marker process for you and for others.

Contact me with any inscription questions at the agency address or at the following:

Email: linda.henderson@thc.state.tx.us \* Phone: 512/463-5851 \* Fax: 512/475-3122

**Notes:** Please let me know if you have any questions.



**TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 1, 2006

The Hon. Ramon Garcia  
Hidalgo County Judge  
P O Box 1356  
Edinburg, TX 78539

RE: ELI JACKSON CEMETERY  
Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and 24" x 16" plaque w/ post; Job # 16605  
Shipment address: Diana Cardenas, 100 East St. John Drive, Pharr, 78577, 956/821-9653

Dear Judge Garcia:

We have ordered the above-referenced marker for casting. A copy of the final inscription as it was sent to the foundry is enclosed for your files. According to our records, the marker should be shipped to the address above. If these instructions have changed during the marker process please let me know as soon as possible so that I may notify the foundry.

If you have not already done so, this would be a good time to begin planning the marker dedication ceremony. However, please avoid setting the dedication date until the marker is received. We cannot guarantee an estimated shipping date because of potential shipping problems or other unforeseen delays, and the best laid dedication plans could be upset if planned around a shipping date. We will notify you and all parties listed below once the marker has been shipped from the foundry.

A guide to planning a dedication ceremony is available from our office upon request. Since this is a state program, we suggest that your state senator and/or representative be included in the program, as well as your county judge and commissioners who have appointed your county historical commission. As soon as the marker is shipped and a dedication date is set, you can submit your event to our calendar on our web site at [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us).

Again, please contact me at 512/463-6063 or e-mail me at [egina.reyes@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:egina.reyes@thc.state.tx.us) if there has been a change in the shipping address, or if you would like a marker dedication guide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Egina G. Reyes".

Egina G. Reyes  
Program Specialist  
History Programs Division

pc: Diana Cardenas



**TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 16, 2006

The Hon. Ramon Garcia  
Hidalgo County Judge  
P O Box 1356  
Edinburg, TX 78539

RE: ELI JACKSON CEMETERY  
Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and 24" x 16" plaque w/ post  
Job # 16605; Date Shipped: 10/09/06

Dear Judge Garcia:

The above-referenced marker was recently shipped to Diana Cardenas, 100 East St. John Drive, Pharr, 78577, 956/821/9653, on the above referenced date. If it has not been received, please contact the Southwell Company at 210/223-1831 so that it may be traced. Please be prepared to give the job number and the date shipped.

We would appreciate having photocopies of any newspaper clippings (rather than the original clippings, which aren't archival stable) or photos about the dedication ceremony to complete our file on this marker.

Thank you for your continued support and good work toward the preservation of the history of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Egina G. Reyes".

Egina G. Reyes  
Program Specialist  
History Programs Division

pc: Diana Cardenas

## Egina Reyes

---

**From:** Egina Reyes  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 01, 2006 9:50 AM  
**To:** 'Scott Southwell'  
**Subject:** Marker Order - Job # 16605  
**Attachments:** 16605.rtf

Date: August 1, 2006

**Contract Item #: 22**  
Contract Price: \$ 697.00

Job #: 16605  
County: Hidalgo  
Title: ELI JACKSON CEMETERY  
Size: Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and 24" x 16" plaque w/ post  
Engraved #: HG-C072  
Surface: na

**RUSH:** na

**NOTES:** na

**SHIPPING ADDRESS:**

Diana Cardenas  
100 East St. John Drive  
Pharr, 78577  
956/821-9653

A cheerful heart is good medicine!

Thank you

Egina G. Reyes  
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8/1/2006

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- ☒ **approved (no corrections)**  
☐ **approved as noted**  
☐ **revise and resubmit**

signed by:

DU/BB

date:

09.1.06

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN ONE (1) COPY.  
FAILURE TO SIGN THIS PROOF WILL RESULT  
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Thank You

**CUSTOMER:**

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

CAPITOL STATION

AUSTIN, TX 78711

**SHIP TO:**

DIANA CARDENAS

100 EAST ST. JOHN DRIVE

PHARR, TX 78577

956-821-9653

**MEDALLION & LARGE  
PLAQUE WITH POST**

16" W X 24" H

SCALE: 3/16" = 1"

Revision - 8-30-06

**ELI JACKSON CEMETERY**

IN 1857, NATHANIEL JACKSON CAME FROM ALABAMA AND ESTABLISHED A RANCH IN THIS AREA. A FORMER SLAVE OWNER, JACKSON, WHO WAS WHITE, CAME WITH HIS WIFE MATILDA HICKS, WHO WAS BLACK, THEIR CHILDREN AND HIS FREED SLAVES. ON HIS 5,500-ACRE RANCH, JACKSON RAISED LIVESTOCK AND GREW VEGETABLES, COTTON AND SUGARCANE. HE ALSO ESTABLISHED A CHAPEL THAT SERVED FAMILY AND FRIENDS. HE WAS KNOWN FOR HIS GENEROSITY AND HOSPITALITY, AND MANY, INCLUDING RUNAWAY SLAVES, CAME TO THE RANCH IN NEED OF LODGING AND OTHER RESOURCES. UPON JACKSON'S DEATH IN 1865, HIS HEIRS DIVIDED THE PROPERTY. THE SHARE TO HIS SON ELI INCLUDED THIS SITE, THE FAMILY CEMETERY. ELI AND HIS WIFE, ELIZABETH KERR, AND THEIR CHILDREN CONTINUED THE FAMILY TRADITION OF HOSPITALITY. ELI SERVED AS A COUNTY OFFICIAL, AS DID HIS SON NATHANIEL "POLO" JACKSON. POLO'S DAUGHTER ADELA OPERATED THE RANCH AND CARED FOR THE CEMETERY UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1992.

TODAY, THE ELI JACKSON CEMETERY REPRESENTS THE EARLY AREA RANCHING COMMUNITIES. THE BURIAL GROUND IS A TIE TO THE JACKSON FAMILY, AND TO THEIR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS FROM THE PAST WHO SHARE THIS AS A FINAL RESTING PLACE.

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY • 2005

24"

16"

← 2" POST

JOB # 16605

COUNTY: HIDALGO

RE: ELI JACKSON CEMETERY

FILE  
DATE

SUBMITTED: 8.7.06

DRAWN BY: MARI HERNANDEZ

QUANTITY: ONE (1)

MATERIAL: CAST ALUMINUM

FINISH: BLACK BACKGROUND

SIZE: 16" WIDE X 24" HIGH

BORDER: SINGLE LINE

LETTERS: RIBBON (TEXT) &amp; RUNIC (TITLE)

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